

STONE WALLS

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As I write this Thanksgiving is approaching—it seems appropriate to give thought to the many advantages of living here in the hilltowns of Western Massachusetts. This is a pleasant, indeed largely beautiful area, with many recreational opportunities from its lakes, rivers, woods and hills. Snow is whiter in winter and the summer air cooler and breezier than our neighboring cities and their suburbs. Pollution is less of a problem here—our air “unsmogged”, our water unfluoridated, and for many of us chlorine free and tasting delicious. Most of us can, if we desire, grow our own fruits and vegetables, keep a hive of bees, and even raise meat, eggs and poultry. Some of us may still keep a milk cow, though I haven't noticed many lately. All this food can be unsprayed, untampered with, free of chemicals and preservatives if we wish. The option is ours. More and more of us now cut and burn wood in winter to heat our homes.

It is quieter and more restful living here than in the city, but usually close enough for convenient shopping and an occasional movie, play, or concert. We have more freedom to follow our individual life style without considering the neighbors. My barking dog is less likely to annoy you. I don't feel obliged to cut my grass, rake leaves in the fall, paint my house or clear my sidewalk of snow. I can even go outdoors in my nightgown or scream at my husband with no one the wiser.

We have much to be thankful for!

Louise Ineson

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Contents

2	SCHOOL DAYS.....	Lucie Mollison, Doris Smith & Madeline Smith
9	HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?.....	Ida Joslyn, Damasis Fernandez Sierra, Katheryn Darrow, Connie Dorrington and Natalie Birrell
15	GRANDMA WILLISTON.....	May Smith
18	HAIL TO THE PREDATORS.....	Natalie Birrell
20	BUILDING FOR MY FATHER.....	Colin Reid
22	TWENTY SIX MILES ON THE WESTERN RAILROAD...	William Guild
26	MAY 8, 1978.....	Diane Laude
27	HOW IT WAS DONE IN "OLDEN DAYS".....	Doris W. Hayden
35	HOW BEAUTY TOLD ME.....	Helen Scott
36	THE HISTORY OF EARLY RUSSELL.....	Jim Meissner, Diana Fuller, Luann Thayer and Doris Dumais
38	LETTERS TO THE EDITORS	

School Days

*By Lucie Mollison, Doris Smith, and
Madeline Smith*

“School days, school days
Good old golden rule days
Readin’ and writin’ and ’rithmetic,
Taught to the tune of a hick’ry stick...”

One day we three got together at Ida Josyln’s and talked about our first teaching jobs. Connie Dorrington had her tape recorder and here are some of the things we remembered.

Lucie Mollison’s first school was in Goshen and the date was 1918. She said:

“I got off on the wrong foot to start with because of course everything had been arranged by mail. The school committee wrote to me to come the day before Labor Day to get the school ready for the first day. So I did. That was a Sunday, of course, and it was war time. I took the train to Northampton. at that time there was a bus that went through Goshen and Cummington and on to Pittsfield. They dumped me at the Goshen store and the woman there called up Mr. Sears with whom I was to board and he came down after me lickety-jingle and didn’t I know it was war time and that I was being very unpatriotic because they asked people not to drive on Sunday, and he had to do that to come and get me?.

“That next day I went to the school which was down through the woods, not very far, and I had never seen a school like it before. I didn’t have the advantage Doris did of rural training. They didn’t have it at Salem, I believe. We had had a couple of days at a country school but it was pretty modern for those days. And here I came up to the backwoods of Goshen. It was one room and it was not in too good condition. The blackboards were cloth, nailed to the walls and painted.”

“Could you ever erase anything from those, or wash them?”

“Oh, yes, they worked pretty well, but I’d never seen anything like that before. I had a table for a desk with one drawer in front. I cleaned it up and got to work on the room.

“The next day the kids came. There was one little girl at the Sears’s where I boarded. —WINIFRED—She was in the fourth grade. and of course she escorted me to school. And then the others came. There was one other little girl in the fourth grade



Photo courtesy of Lucie Mollison

--Bessie. She was a state girl, lived with Harry's (Harry Mollison) Aunt. She was, of course, getting a very good bringing up. She was a nice child. By the way, Bessie called on me the other day. She's living in Belchertown now. In those days the state youngsters left school at 14 and had to find work and were expected to get a couple of dollars a week besides board. Well, of course, Bessie lived with Aunt Mary, and when she was 14, she was ready to go on and, of course, supposed to leave. But Aunt Mary paid her what she was supposed to get, and sent her to Smith School. She took their child care course and she worked as a children's--well not a nurse, but taking care of children, all her life. She had some very nice positions. She's now retired and living in Belchertown.

"Then there were the boys. Victor was a city-of Boston boy, big and fat and pretty good because if he was kept after school he'd get beaten. So no matter what Victor did I never kept him after school. He was really beaten..."

"Not just paddled!"

"This was by the older boys?"

"Oh, no, by his folks, the people he was placed with. Victor was about 12, I guess. Then there was Julius. Julius was a good boy, not the brightest, but a good boy.

And there was Herman. Herman was appealing. He had very bad eyes but he didn't have glasses. He stammered. He said he had started to last year when the teacher made him write with his right hand. But she had said that was nonsense. So I let him go back to his left hand and he got over it. And got myself in Dutch with some of the foster parents, especially the woman who had him, because I wrote to the state visitor about him. He couldn't do the work, he was nearly blind. And she came up and took him and got him glasses and that was all he needed. She finally took him away from there. He was small and he was always in trouble because he couldn't do as much work as Mrs. wanted him to."

"They really had the state children to work for them, then? They weren't really being generous in giving them a home?"

"Oh, no. Now Aunt Mary did. She had one before Bessie and she sent him through high school. But most of them just wanted them to work. Mrs. usually had three. She had quite a big farm and only one farmer. She was a widow. She kept these boys for help. Finally she took quite a young boy. He was only 8 years old and she had to take his little sister, too, because they wouldn't separate them. That didn't do very well.

"After they took Herman away, Herman



Photo courtesy of Lucie Mollison

had a happy ending. He was on a farm and he had to work hard, but they were very, very good to him. They sent him right through High School and he stayed right on there, working, and when the man died, Herman inherited the farm. He is now a pillar in the Church. I saw him last winter when I went to an Association meeting down there. And after the business meeting was over in the afternoon, and we were waiting for supper, he came up to me, threw his arms around me, and gave me a big kiss. Of course, everybody was staring at me, and he said, 'Well, you know, if she hadn't got after them and made them get me glasses, I wouldn't have known anything.'

Then there was a little state girl named Edna who had never had a doll. She used to take a stick and wrap her sweater around it and hold it. So when I went home, I told my family about it and when I was ready to go back, my cousin had a doll all ready to take back to her.

I taught in Goshen for two years under the same superintendent. From what I know now, I would say he wasn't much good. Then I went to Swift River and that was a different story. The mothers cleaned the schoolhouse before I got there. All these children had homes and their own parents. I didn't have a good boarding place in Swift River, the boarding place in Goshen had been good, though I had the same lunch every single day: two meat sandwiches, a pickle, a piece of apple pie, and something to drink. It was good, but monotonous. The fish man used to come up there and I got him to stop. It was Henry Richardson. I used to buy some oysters from him, and eat them raw. The kids were amazed at that. They had never seen anyone to that!"

Madeline Smith began her teaching career in 1929. She says:

"My first year of teaching was in the two room Worthington School, which was

held on the first floor of what is now known as the Old Lyceum Hall. I taught grades 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 and was principal of the school. For both jobs I received the large sum of \$800.00 for the year. The second year, the teacher who had the lower grades couldn't manage the 4th grade, so I added that to my other five grades with no additional remuneration!

Our school day started at 8:30 and ended at 4, with the exception of the winter months when school ended at 3:30.

The heating system at that time consisted of a wood stove in the front of the room near teacher's desk, with the stove pipe going from there all the way to the back of the room.

Most of the transportation to the school was by car. However, the route which included lower Old Post Road area used a horse and buggy. Grandma Jeanette Knapp was the faithful driver of that route. One of the families who were picked up by her was George and Harold Brown. Their step-father, Cy Bowers, told me to keep the boys after school any time that they misbehaved. This would mean that they would have a long walk home. Only once did I have to mention that if they didn't get their work done, they would have to stay. Incidentally, George and his wife, who now live in Texas, spent a week here this summer visiting relatives and friends.

Whenever the side roads got real muddy in the spring, school closed for mud vacation, which lasted from two to three weeks depending on the weather.

It was the responsibility of the principal of the Worthington School to order supplies for the school in West Worthington, and the one in Christian Hollow as well as her own school. The distribution worked out fine with one exception. West Worthington school ran out of toilet tissue before expected. There was only one roll left to go for both boys and girls for a period of ten days. Needless to say a great-

er amount was ordered after that.

One of the bus routes that went part way of East Windsor Road was run by Imogene Cole. One day she was going to be away so she asked me to drive the school bus after school, which I did. But when I drove into the driveway at the Hathaway home, which is now Chet Jones's the battery fell out of the car. The children, all five of them, got home on time but I was a little late getting to my destination.

Another incident which I remember was when Mrs. Carmaletta Martin came to school after the children had gone, and spent a good half-hour telling me how I should vote in November. I was just barely nineteen at the time and so embarrassed to have to tell her that I wasn't old enough to vote.

After teaching in Worthington I accepted the job of teaching the first grade in Feeding Hills. I had forty-five children, most of them of Polish or Italian descent who took their books home every night to teach their parent what they had learned each day, so that they *too* could read.

I was the only teacher who had a car, so when any of the children were taken sick in school I had to take them home. We had an out-break of scarlet fever one year and as the children became feverish and developed a rash, they were sent home. One little girl seemed very feverish to me. but when I tried to look for a rash on her chest, I found that she had six warm sweaters little sweaters all sewed together under her dress. No way could I get to look at her chest.

On the first day of school, fifteen of my first graders were sitting up in the front of the room in a semi-circle for reading. I was sitting in one of those very small chairs with my back to the blackboard, when all of a sudden one of the little boys jumped up and screamed, 'Oh, Miss Townsend, look at the rat!' Sure enough, right behind my chair was a big hole in the base-

board and a rat running behind where I was sitting. There is nothing in this world that I dislike more than a mouse or a rat. So I very calmly said, 'Let's go back to our desks and practice writing some numbers.' The very next day the janitor kindly nailed a board over the rat-hole.

Every minute of the school day was a challenge, and oh, so rewarding.

Doris Sanderson Smith came to Worthington in the fall of 1934.

"They still had one room schools then?"

"Oh, yes I trained at North Adams, and I asked to be trained for rural schools. So in my Junior year I went to Otis for eight weeks of training there to see if I liked it. And I did! So when I applied for a job, I applied for one in a rural school, and I got a chance to come to South Worthington. That was during the depression and very few people had jobs, so I was glad to have one even though the salary was only \$750.00 a year. But I was told when I took the contract that (1) there was no place to board in South Worthington and (2) that the teacher had to take charge of the 4-H work. That sounded like fun to me. At the same time that I took this job, Marjori Bartlett took the school on Highland Street and I could ride with her from Worthington in her old jalopie that just about got us back and forth.

"That first day of school I can remember so vividly. The children came in. There were only 12 or 13, just the South Worthington children at that time



Photo courtesy of Doris Smith

(Higginses, Witherells, and a few others). The school was up the road from the present Drummer's Club. We had no janitor and no running water. We had to carry water in a gallon jug.

"The first 4-H meeting was Tuesday right after school. I thought it would be simple. Alice Witherell came up to me and said,

'You know I'm in my 6th year in 4-H and I have to make a dress.'

"Now I'd never done anything like that in my life. But I told her, 'You pick out the pattern and material and we'll cut it out at the next meeting.'"

"So I went home that week-end and told my mother to teach me how to cut out a dress and show me how to use a pattern. We went to Northampton and bought a pattern almost like the one Alice would use, and got some material and to be sure to get it on the right side, we basted the whole thing (my mother believed in basting everything). I sewed it up and fitted it, and the dress was quite presentable.

"So the following Tuesday, Alice came in with this material and a pattern and she said,

'My mother says we can cut it out today, but you'll have to do it, because she does not know anything about it.'

"Well, we laid it out on the large table we had in the school room and we cut it out. She sewed it and it turned out to be a beautiful dress which was lucky both for her and me.

"The second year I was in South Worthington I boarded at Melson Pease's, with the stipulation that they put in a telephone so that I would be able to communicate with other people if I needed to. I paid for the telephone.

"I can remember one little boy with older brothers and sisters. He was the first grade and when it came time for him to have a primer, he said to me, 'Oh, I can read, Miss Sanderson.' So he took the

book, like any 2 or 3 year old, held it upside down and 'read' it beautifully. So I said, 'Let's turn the book the other way, and let's turn over three or four pages and then we'll go on from there.' He looked at me with big brown eyes and said, 'I can only read when I start at the beginning of the story.'



Photo courtesy of Doris Smith

"After I had been in South Worthington for three years I transferred to West Worthington. I boarded with the Thayers. It was at that time, 1937, that electricity first came into West Worthington and I remember that Mrs. Thayer, whose granddaughter lived with her and walked to school with me each day, said to me, 'Now, I want you to promise that you will be sure

that Lois and you walk on the opposite side from those light poles because if she touches one she'll get electrocuted.' That struck me as funny because I had always lived in a village that had electricity. I told her it wouldn't hurt us any, but she insisted that I promise or 'Lois isn't walking with you!'

"I taught three years in West Worthington, and then I went to Peru, and I taught there for thirty-two years. I had eight grades for a long time, and then when Peru got bigger, it was reduced to six grades. When they built the addition it dropped to three grades, which I had there for the last few years.

"The first year I went up there we had an old coal burning stove and I had never handled coal in any way and knew nothing about it. It was up to the teacher to take care of the stove in the morning. Every single morning when I tried to start the fire, it would blow back in my face. So I explained it to the superintendent and he said to open all the drafts and let the gases go up and it wouldn't do that. So I'd open all the drafts and let the gases go up and it wouldn't do that. So I'd open all the drafts and when I opened the door, it would still blow back in my face. So, one morning, I asked him if he'd show me how, since I just couldn't get a fire going. So he came up and he opened the drafts, and adjusted the dampers, checked the stovepipe and all the paraphernalia and said, 'Now, do you see how to do it?' and I said, 'Yes, now open the door.' He did and it blew out and scorched his face! So the very next day the school committee ordered a new oil-burning stove which was really heavenly after that old contraption.

"When I had the eight grades we had school from 8:30 to 3:30 which was a long day for first graders. By afternoon they'd be pretty restless and noisy. So I had it arranged that after lunch they could go out in front and play. I could watch them from

the window, and they had to stay within the fenced-in area and the only reason they could come back into the building was if they needed a drink or had to go to the rest rooms, or if they were hurt. But if they came into the classroom, it would be like a mouse-trap which would catch them and they couldn't get out again. One day I saw the two little girls (there were three children outside, two girls and one boy) standing in the doorway giggling in the silly way that only little girls have, so I asked them, 'What's the matter?' 'Oh,' they said, 'Frankie went to the toilet outdoors.' Oh,' I said, 'I don't think he'd do that.' 'Yes, he did!' So I thought I'd best go out and see. And there was Frankie, standing there, feet apart, big as life, and I asked him if he had and he said, 'Yes, I did! Those girls said I couldn't hit that window, so I proved that I could.' Sure enough, there was a stream of water trickling down the wall!

Another time, in Peru, the town voted to dump loam and gravel from the sides of the roads into the front yard of the school if the children would level it off to make a better school yard. We thought that would make a good project for recesses. So we had rakes and we worked at leveling it and picking up stones. One little boy in first grade brought his wagon and we loaded the stones into it and the children would take them around in back and dump them over a bank there. We were getting along nicely, but, like any job, it got tiresome after awhile. So, one hot day, they took a load of stones and gave the wagon a big shove over the bank, and somebody would go along with it. So I thought I'd have them change that so I walked down with them. Well, he wanted to show me how far he could push the whole thing so he pushed it over and I said to him 'Let's not do that anymore. You have to be careful or somebody will get hurt.' So he gave me a defiant look out of big brown eyes and

said, 'Well, who's the boss of this outfit, anyway?'

"In those days there weren't any teacher's aides or supervisors. We could do some things you couldn't do now. In West Worthington we used to give up morning recesses in the winter so we could go down on the pond and skate for an hour and half at noon time. We took our lunches down and had a great time. Some people in town who were pupils then still remember that.

"I liked multi-grades in one room, even when I had as many as 28 pupils in eight grades. You could put the bigger ones with the younger ones and that would be reinforcing their learning and at the same time

helping the little ones. And all through the grades they'd be hearing the lessons over and over and you'd be surprised how much they'd learn that way. I loved rural school-teaching; I really loved it."

All these former teachers agreed on some of the values of the one-room school that have been lost to the modern school: the freedom from rigid schedules and the demands of a "system", the opportunities for individual help; the development of caring among the students; the continued reinforcement of their learning; and an opportunity for "old-fashioned fun" like ice-skating and snowball fights and those long-lost Christmas programs!

HELP, PLEASE!

We would like to do an article on the "Great Depression" of the nineteen thirties as it affected our hill towns. In order to do this we must gather information from town reports, diaries, letters, old newspaper clippings, personal reminiscences, etc. We especially need our reader's help. Will you put on your thinking-caps and locate any material you have tucked away? Will you write to us, relating your experiences and those of your families and friends during this trying time? Did many of our local residents lose their jobs? Did local businesses fold up? How did people in our towns cope when times were tough and money scarce or non-existent? If you simply don't feel able to put pencil to paper we will come to you with pad and pencil or tape recorder. Just address your material or request to *STONE WALLS*, BOX 85, HUNTINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS 01050, or contact any member of the EDITORIAL BOARD listed on the inside back cover. Don't hesitate-do it now!

How Does Your Garden Grow

"Mary, Mary, quite contrary
How does your garden grow?
With Silver Bells, and cockle shells
And Pretty maids all in a row!"



Drawing by Mary Rapisarda

by *Ida Joslyn*

Once a young visitor, looking at my vegetable garden in early spring, remarked, "I think I'd rather have the weeds."

She was referring to the newspapers I use for mulch between the rows to keep grass down as well as the weeds. My early garden does look rather like a trash heap. I lay the papers, folded in half, end to end and keep them from blowing away by laying narrow old boards along the edges (or stones). I also make a border on the far edge where the winter squash are planted, a border based on the left over manure pile with added leaves, grass clippings, weeds and thinnings pulled out of the garden, garbage, and anything else that makes compost. So you can call it "trash gardening", I guess.

Last year the peas didn't do well. I'll go back to planting Little Marvel seeds. They really can do without support, so they are best for me since fence building is not one of my strong points. I had a spectacular spinach (Burpee's Melody Hybrid) and the prettiest lettuce I've ever raised. I planted carrots in with the spinach. I think this year I'll plant a double row: carrots thick about 8 inches from the spinach. The spinach then acts as a nurse crop and the carrots fill in the space when the spinach has gone by.

Last year I used cages for the tomatoes. The one that was 30 inches in diameter worked very well. The others were too narrow. So this spring they'll be wider. I plant the tomato seeds, two seeds or three, in oatmeal boxes, cut in half. Then the young plants do not have to be moved when set in the garden. The bottom comes out of the box easily by that time, and the sides act as a collar for the plant to protect it from cut-worms.

This spring I'm going to plant winter squash out in the garden early and cover the plants. Sometimes the Hubbard Squash doesn't have time to mature if planted after all danger of frost is past.

I have all my annual flowers in my vegetable garden. Nasturtiums in the broccoli row and in the border. Zinnias and calendulas and marigolds and bright blue skull-cap behind the herb border. Stray hollyhocks and iris among the pea vines. I like it that way.

I use well-rotten manure and compost for fertilizer, applied in the row rather than broadcast. In the fall, all the debris of frosted plants and leaves is left right on the garden to break down into compost as the winter progresses. I plant buckwheat and spade it under either in the fall or early spring.



Maple-leaf Gardening, or More Lies about Gardening without Work

Damaris Fernandez Sierra

Well now, gentle reader, whatever you want to hear from me, what you are going to hear is what I have been asked to write, to wit, a little bit of Ruth Stout gardening without work. The unfortunate thing is that instead of my writing it now while the leaves are falling off the trees and lying inches thick on the ground, you should be reading it now, because those leaves are vital to my gardening method. I rake them up and stuff them into plastic bags. While winter lasts they are then packed against the windward side of our house. These bagged leaves represent my standby supply once spring and gardening gets under way. The rest of the leaf supply, and there is a lot more, is also raked and simply piled onto the vegetable garden, and when there is a goodly pile there the continuing rest is dumped among the raspberry canes. Do not, dear reader, ever be tempted by their availability to mulch your blueberry bushes with maple leaves. The books will tell you that both raspberries and blueberries like acid soil. Like black and black, white and white, there must be acid and acid. Raspberries love maple leaves, thrive on them and with no other fertilizer produce bumper crops. Mulch your blueberries with them and they may not die, but nor will they grow and produce. Mulch them with pine needles and they behave like raspberries with maple leaves. However, back to the leaf pile. If you live in Worthington or any other windy spot, it is a good idea to place something on top of your leaf pile, bean poles, pruned raspberry canes that you are going to burn in April, anything, because when the snow

goes, and please let us have some snow this year, and that spring wind starts whistling around your house and garden, all your carefully gathered leaves will gradually dry out and blow away if you do not pin them down.

So, when this is printed, those of us who have lived through the winter will be out in our gardens looking around, wondering where to begin and where we put everything last year. Those clever organized people who plan their time and everything else, will have neat little maps of last year's garden, even notes in a note book, and that is very good, but I am not like that. I go out there and stumble around, falling over sticks still standing in the half frozen ground, still supporting a dried dead vine, and that is how it all comes back to me. I pull up the stick, examine the vine, "Ha! a tomato! That's right, the tomatoes were here last year, that means that the onions were over there..." and so on and so forth. Based on that I mentally lay out this year's garden, meanwhile chucking the stick and vine towards the bonfire spot, well, to the leeward side of the leaf pile, and gradually everything left over from last year joins it. And I mean everything. Do not be tempted by anything because it looks so nice and ready to decompose. Burn the lot. Cold does not kill bugs, eggs, and so forth, and everything left over from last year is generously infested with every kind of bug that plans, in some form or another, sooner or later, to munch, fold, spindle and mutilate your garden. If you have more energy than I have, hired help,

children still around who do as they are asked, or even, heavenly days, a husband who enjoys helping in the garden, you could rake up all this stuff, debris from another time and put it in a compost pile, where heat will indeed kill, far away from your dear vegetables. It might even be an excellent thing to do, but I enjoy a good fire, where strong heat certainly kills, (and don't forget to get a fire permit) so I believe in burning the lot.

In spite of Ruth Stout, I also believe in digging up some of my garden every year. My reason for this is three fold. Digging is an excellent exercise (I once took a whole inch off my waist by digging for only one weekend. Along time ago, bien entendu). It is pleasantly rhythmic and you can think about absolutely anything while you dig. It is good for the soil, especially if you go down more than one spit and break up that hard pan with which we are so abundantly blessed, and thirdly, as I am also abundantly blessed with witch grass and bind weed and mint, there are areas that I have to dig each and every year to keep these enemies at bay. So I dig. But if none of the above apply to you, you don't have to. You have tidied up in a rough general way, so now you get out your hand cultivator and garden-as opposed to wire-rake and get to work to prepare the ground to a fine tilth, ready to receive the seeds. The dictionary says that tilth is the state of being tilled or prepared for a crop. Don't you believe it. Tilth is soil that is ready for the seed when that soil has been so cared for and fed with good organic matter over the years that when you pick up a handful of it, it looks and feels as rich and firm and crumbly and black as crumbs from a good home made loaf of black bread.

So you have worked with your hand cultivator and rake, drawn drills with your hoe and planted your seed. Row One, carrots, no doubt. Mark each end of the row with a stick because should a storm shift all your mulch you must know where your rows are. If a weed cannot grow through a thick mat of leaves, nor can a lettuce or carrot. Plant your next row, swiss chard, perhaps, leaving a generous distance between rows. Not, heaven forbid, so that you can pollute the air by ripping up and down with your fuming roto-tiller, but so that you have the room to pile up your leaves. again pinning them down with anything handy and suitable, and not have them overlay the poor struggling plant. Leaves are better than hay because they are not laden with seeds, but hay is great for pinning down leaves and also rots into the ground. However, remember your acidity and apply lime every year.

And so on, through the whole planting calendar with the only difference being that when it comes to PLANTS as opposed to SEEDS the whole area can be heavily covered with leaves, and each plant can be planted right through the layer of leaves, as with tomatoes, with no earth exposed at all for any weeds to sieze upon. This last year I had ripe tomatoes in mid-July in spite of a cold June, although I do admit there is more to my tomato method than just mulch. That however is another story. Potatoes too, can simply be buried in maple leaves with no earth showing.

Do not forget, in all your idleness, that weeds are determined to grow. Mulch is determined to rot. This is where that reserve supply of bagged leaves comes in. As your mulch rots into the soil you need to keep topping it up, defeating the weeds before they can get a root in the door.

by Katheryn Darrow

My garden grows in tangles. I have experimented with round plantings of corn, peas and lettuce in wide rows, tomatoes unstaked, and tomatoes planted around chicken-wire cyclinders. Usually I am so busy experimenting I neglect the basics--like thinning and weeding. My idea of a nifty garden is when the cucumber vines invade the broccoli, leaving nests of cucumbers hiding everywhere. I see

pictures of other peoples' gardens in nice neat rows, but not mine. why, then, do I think it is so fine, even beautiful? Probably the answer is because my garden is tokenism, compared to Nature's garden work. Each year I see some new evidence of Her potency and my insignificance. It's a lop-sided partnership--our garden--a playground for me and a proving ground for her.



by Connie Dorrington

And how does my garden grow? Like almost everyone elses; in row upon row of annuals. Granted, the rows are 36 inches wide. Tomatos, rutabagas, cosmos, parsley, summer savory, carrots, lavender----varying in content and variety from year to year. This infinitesimal corner of Earth I try to keep at least as good as I found it for I cannot better it by cultivation. My garden is a microcosm of mans' effect on the soil. When the winter winds blow over the potato fields to the east they also blow where our corn stood in August---clouds of dust go swirling. In spring the heavy rains make a quagmire of the lower end of our 'X' plot. Since it gently slopes, fine silt settles there. Across the way the potato fields (which alternate with corn and rye) have eroded gullies deep enough to hide my big dog since they

are plowed up and down rather than contoured. Bare spots appear where the Earths' skin diminished, showing boney ledge.

I try to take the long view and plan accordingly. Then the new seed catalogues come with the Christmas mail and I once again lose myself in making choices among the annuals. Nature plants annuals for a "quick-fix" when the soil holding perennials have been disturbed. Only the rhubarb, strawberries, asparagus, and some herbs won't have to be replanted this year. The mulched, raised beds will once again produce more than we can eat or put by. The garden will heal again and I'll have done things just a bit better than the year before--but not compared with Mother Nature.

by Natalie Birrell

My garden is near the top of Montgomery mountain on a rocky bluff from which minerals and nutrients wash down to the valley below except where laced by tree roots and trapped between rocks some pockets of sand and leaf mold provide sustenance for acid-loving plants--laurel, oak, birch, ground pine and ladyslippers. The natural mountain is beautiful, but the possibility of growing vegetables in this craggy nook, partially filled with the builder's soil after our house was finished was not too good.

But this year we had a beautiful lettuce garden just outside the dining room on the

southwest side. With the help and encouragement of my son and daughter-in-law, they dug a pit, lining it with rocks that they extracted, and dumped in some straw and manure. We started building soil, adding the Fall leaves and lime and the vegetable and fruit peels from the kitchen. The family was a bit embarrassed by my air-mailing garbage out the dining room window all winter. However, one creature's waste is another's banquet and the small organisms turned it into the kind of loose and crumbly garden soil which brought us lettuce, parsley and herbs all summer and fall.



Grandma Williston

by May Smith

Vital statistics, of course, never entered my mind as I was growing up and knew her. The fact that she was born October 26, 1851, (the seventh child of thirteen born to Warren Rudd and Mary Ann (Bronson) Holcomb, mattered none to me. Juliaetta, commonly called Etta--this was Grandma Williston.

She and Gramp lived just a short distance from us in an old salt-box house surrounded by maple trees. She walked to our house each morning at about a certain time, usually bringing us something. In the spring, some of the first maple syrup, deliciously gold! Later, as they bloomed, there was flowering almond, arbutus and the lovely purple lilacs that grew by the front piazza. Still later were the hardy sweet peas from the corner of the house.

My sister and I frequently work around the place now cutting grass and weeds. The buildings have fallen victim to the years, but memories are everywhere. We look for wild strawberries and it seems we can see her, squatting in the grass--her

faded calico dress over her rounded shoulders--picking the small delicacies.

Gramp and Gram almost always "kept" summer boarders. Gramp met them in Russell at the train station with the horses and surrey. As I look at it now I'm sure it was necessary in order to have just a few extra dollars.

I can remember most of them. There was Miss Sawtell, a prim school teacher. She had the big "front chamber". She sat straight in her rocking chair by the window and read. Then there was Annie Keough, Alice McDermott, and Miss Sullivan. I don't recall their occupations, but they were younger and more lively and took part in haying activities. We have many pictures they took around the farm. Also, Gramp and Gram used to have State Wards--one a man confined to his wheel chair. And they brought up three boys from a large family whose parents had a hard time to get along.

Gram was a fine seamstress in her younger days, I'm told. One of her special-



Picking strawberries

Drawing by May Smith

ties was men's shirts with the tucked bosoms. Her sewing machine still stands at Mom's house by the door that goes upstairs. Mom used to use it, as did my sister and I before we were married and left home. I have a feeling it would still work with good oiling and a new belt!

Gram also found time to go into homes to help when there was a sickness or death.

Things I remember could make a long story. The kitchen was large with a beamed ceiling. Baking and cooking were done on an old Home Comfort Range, with a large copper tank at one end for heating water. Gramp had his comfortable chair by this end, where he sat and smoked his clay pipe.

As soon as dishes were washed from a meal the table was "set" again. (I remember Gramp had a large moustache cup which was always turned bottom side up on its' deep saucer.) In fly-season the table was covered with a large piece of netting. It must be that some readers can recall what the fly problem was on farms! Some folks had screen doors and at times it seemed the upper part would be almost covered with flies waiting for some one to come in or go out so that they might hurry in. Remember the sheets of black poison paper that could be bought? You placed a

piece of this on an old saucer or lard-pail cover--put a little water on it and set it, probably on the back of the table or in window sills. Flies liked this and usually died in quantities on the window sills or less desirable places. Then, too, there were the sheets of sticky paper that were placed around where people, or the cats, wouldn't be likely to get stuck. Fly ribbons were also hung from the ceilings, and the flies buzzed and buzzed while they waited to die from capture.

Dad said his mother depended a lot on him bringing home a couple of squirrels, a bird, or a rabbit when he came from school, so that she would have something for a meat pie. Also, I remember her chicken pies made in milk-pans. Big pieces of chicken and the rich crust, always made with the fat she rendered from the fowl. Mince meat pies, and extra large sugar cookies usually made with sour cream were a stand-by.

Then, after butchering the pigs, besides curing the regular cuts of meat she made souse. This was less fancy pieces of both fat and lean partially cooked, with perhaps a little vinegar--I'm not sure, but it had a pleasant slightly sour taste. This was put down in stone crocks, and the melted fat poured over. These crocks were put in the

cellar, and some was brought up as needed, rolled in corn meal and fried. This made a good change from a rather monotonous diet. I wish I had some now.

Kitchen dances were frequently held at the old house, and Gram and my dad did the Cake Walk, two-step, and particularly the Schottische, as well as Money-Musk, Virginia Reel, and other old popular calls. Gram's feet danced lightly in her little laced or buttoned black shoes. Sometimes, to everyone's delight, she would coyly lift one side of her skirt!

Getting back to the work--Dad has related to us many times how in sugaring time she would meet him as he came from school, half a mile or so from home, with extra pails and a yoke to bring up maple sap. At this time maple sugar sold for twelve cents a pound. Some syrup was boiled in the harder stage for making blocks. There were special tins for this, but frequently bread tins were used. This was a staple stored away for shaving up for

sweetening baking. One specialty was wild strawberry shortcake with heavy cream, and the shaved maple sugar put over it generously. Dad always wanted mom to make at least one this way during the berry season--if we had the maple sugar. Sugar stirred softer was put into pails.

Also, Gram "took in" washings and did the needed mending on garments way into her older years. I remember clothes being boiled on the stove, scrubbed on the board, and many times in summer the white things carefully laid on the grass to make them whiter. In winter many garments were dried in the attic, or in an unused bed-room, or on large wooden frames by the fire. There were clothes lines on the porch, and many a time work clothes were hung over the fence. How time has changed everything!

From an early age, Gram had a bad hearing problem, but as years went by she became totally deaf. She read lips well, and fortunately her vision lasted fairly well so we could write things too lengthy for the lip reading.

Like so many good hard-working women who have always done so much for others, her last months were not easy. One evening at Mom's helping to carry supper dishes to the kitchen she seemed to just collapse and fell, breaking a hip. It was during a snow storm, and our doctor was away for that particular night, so, carefully we put her on a couch and placed solid things along her side (hard season to get sand for sand-bagging). Next morning dad took the tractor and sled, met our doctor, and brought him up the hill. Gram was loaded onto the sled, deeply covered with blankets, and taken to an ambulance waiting at the foot of the hill about a mile down, and taken to the hospital. Sixteen weeks passed with no bone healing, so she was brought home and cared for until the end came, on July 2, 1937. During all this she was always patient and found no fault.



Carrying Sap



Drawing by Natalie Birrell

Hail to the Predators

by Natalie Birrell

Walking in the woods on an Indian Summer day I watched gold leaves spin in the sun as they made their descent. This was the second shedding for the summer. The first had been neither as colorful or as graceful for the first leaves had been irregular and green-brown, eaten to lace by the gypsy moth caterpillar which had earlier in the summer infested these Berkshire hills.

There were on the tree trunks the light brown, clay-like winter lairs of this organism. The moths had clung to the tree trunks exuding a brownish material with small seed pearl-like eggs embedded in it, protected by this substance which hardened to become an adobe-like fortress that would insure the continuation of their cycle. The onslaught of the gypsy moth has seemed both inevitable and a growing



Drawing by Natalie Birrell

plague. A siege mentality had begun to infect the human residents. For those of us who believe that the natural plan is benign, beautiful and balanced this was as disturbing as the actual insect pest. Surely nature would provide a predator specific to the gypsy moth.

I looked more closely at one of the egg cases. It looked less solid. There seemed to be some small holes in it and clustering on the surface were tiny moving black dots. I poked at one with a pencil. It moved to avoid me but it didn't fly or even retreat off the egg case to the tree trunk although it seemed to have wings. Almost every egg case had its black dots almost too small for my eyes to see.

I went home for my glasses and borrowed a magnifying glass. The small dots were tiny fly-like insects. Could this be the predator? Could these small creatures be laying their eggs with the gypsy moth egg? One egg casing was on a loose piece of bark. I tore it off the tree noting that it had four flies on it. When I arrived home a couple of miles away the four flies were

still clinging. In a jar near the warmth of our wood stove the Indian Summer conditions could continue. The next day there were six flies in the jar!

A call to the Department of Entymology at the University of Massachusetts brought some good news. The small fly is a predator. The effect on the total population this year is unknown, but there are others too. A kind of wasp is a similar egg parasite, and two kinds of beetles are caterpillar hunters. This year we can watch this war of the insect world with a contented detachment or malicious excitement knowing the forest will benefit.




Drawing by Natalie Birrell



BUILDING FOR MY FATHER

1



He stacks the wall
colossal,
turns each stone to
fit
into its chink, the clink
of sull stone brightening
from earth to air.

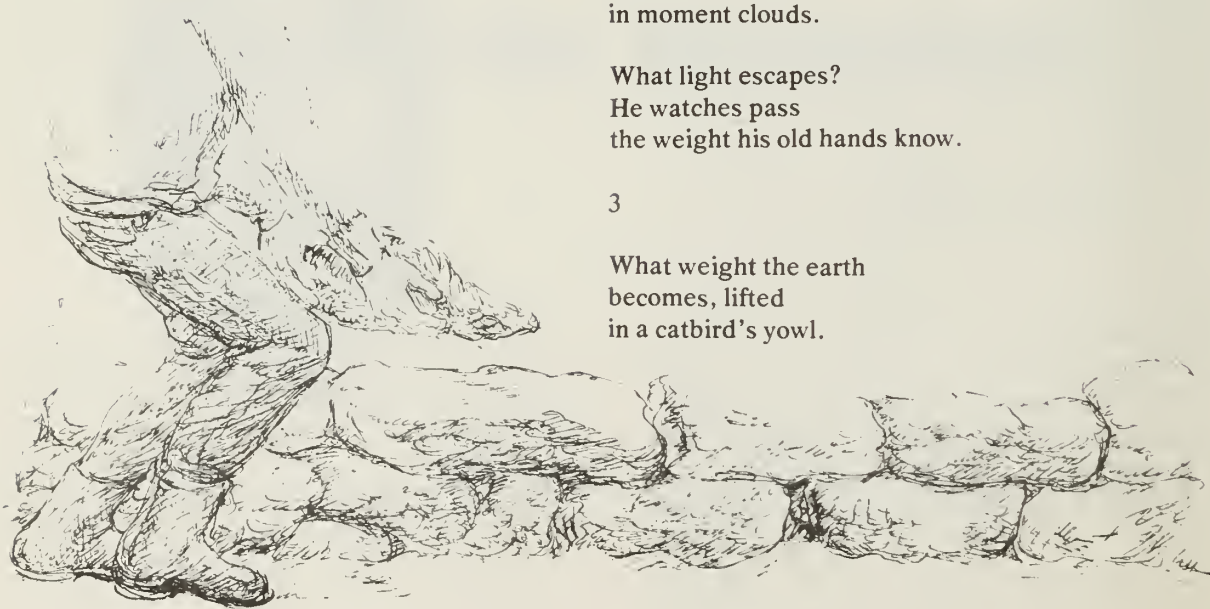
Resting from work,
his dreams float light
between the stones
like slips of air.

2

And slow,
a building in the sky
mimics his work
in moment clouds.

What light escapes?
He watches pass
the weight his old hands know.

3



What weight the earth
becomes, lifted
in a catbird's yowl.



by Collin Reid

They toss
the world between them,
mewing on the edge

always, the brink
slow swallowed
underneath their hoarse
direction: build.

In sleep, perhaps.

A ringing growth,
the scrub of dreams.

4

Avast! The soberness
between your stones
I see through.

Make that message light,
the one betwixt, the space
made most of, clear.

Twenty Six Miles on the Western Railroad

Exerpted from *A CHART AND DESCRIPTION OF THE BOSTON AND WESTERN RAILROADS* published in Boston, 1847

by William Guild

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...At 109 miles the line crosses over Moose Meadow Brook, a stream of considerable size, and continues on through the meadows; the hills, however, gradually closing in. At the 111th mile post the light grade ends, and we enter upon the heavy grades up the rugged and uneven mountain's side. For the next 27 miles there is no grade less than 25 feet to the mile, the rise in that distance being 1270 feet. Here the mountains shut in on both sides of the river, and the line continues on the north bank, along the precipitous side of TEKOA MOUNTAIN where there is scarcely room for a road to be built. Higher up, the canal feeder winds round the rocky side of the hill. Just before arriving at RUSSELL the road crosses the river, for the first time, on a rude bridge; underneath which, the stream tumbling over its rocky bed, forms a very romantic fall. Russell station is in the north part of town, between two high mountains which approach very near each other; Shatterack

Mountain upon the north, and Tuttle Mountain on the south side of the river. There are very few buildings in the vicinity; and the whole appearance of the place is in the highest degree wild and picturesque. It is, indeed, a charming spot; and to those who would, for a few days, leave the hot walls and the din of city life behind, and wander alone, among the wild woods and giant mountains of the country, as God made them, this place, above all others upon the line, is preferable.

At Tuttle Bend Bridge, a short distance west of this station, the road re-crosses the river, and continues up the northern bank as at first. About two miles above Russell, there is a beautiful fall of the Westfield River, in full view of the cars on the south side as we pass along. The rocky points project in all directions, and the water from above as it tumbles along, is whitened with foam, and makes an interesting appearance. On the Opposite side are several mills, finely located. At the 119th mile, the line crosses over the north branch of the Westfield River, and from thence to the summit continues up the west branch,



Roaring Brook

Drawing by Natalie Birrell

crossing it, in a distance of seventeen miles, twenty-four times.

CHESTER VILLAGE the next station is a flourishing manufacturing place, surrounded by hills, and directly upon the railroad. It is in the extreme south eastern part of the town, some of the buildings being in Blandford. The line now again crosses the river, and continues for several miles, at a rise of 35 feet per mile, along the base of the Blandford Mountains, which close down quite to the river, and which are very steep and heavily wooded. On the north bank, also, a chain of hills, nearly as formidable, close the river in a narrow channel. If the traveller can catch a glimpse of Roaring Brook, which comes tumbling down the mountain side, nearly perpendic-

ular for several hundred feet, on the south side of the track, near the 122nd mile, he will be able to judge of the precipitous character of these hills. Before arriving at the next station, however, they recede somewhat from the stream, and the country again appears more open. **CHESTER FACTORIES** is another thriving village, directly upon the road. It is the half-way station between Springfield and Pittsfield. As it is also at the bottom of the heavy mountain section grades, a stop of several minutes is required to prepare for the ascent. Like all other small villages upon the line of the Western Railroad, Chester Factories has rapidly increased in wealth and business since its completion. There is a large amount of water power at

almost any point in this vicinity.

Leaving this station, we pass along through a narrow meadow for a mile and a half, and at 127½ miles, through a deep rock cutting, and immediately over a stone arched bridge, sixty feet above the river, we enter the mountain section. No language that we are master of could give the traveller any proper description of the wildness, the grandeur, or the obstacles surmounted in the construction of this portion of the route. The river is exceedingly crooked, and the lofty mountains, which are very steep and rugged, and of solid rock, shut down quite to the river on both sides, their sharp points shooting by each other, rendering crossings at every bend of the stream indispensable. In addition to this, the points of the hills must be cut away, and for many miles these rock

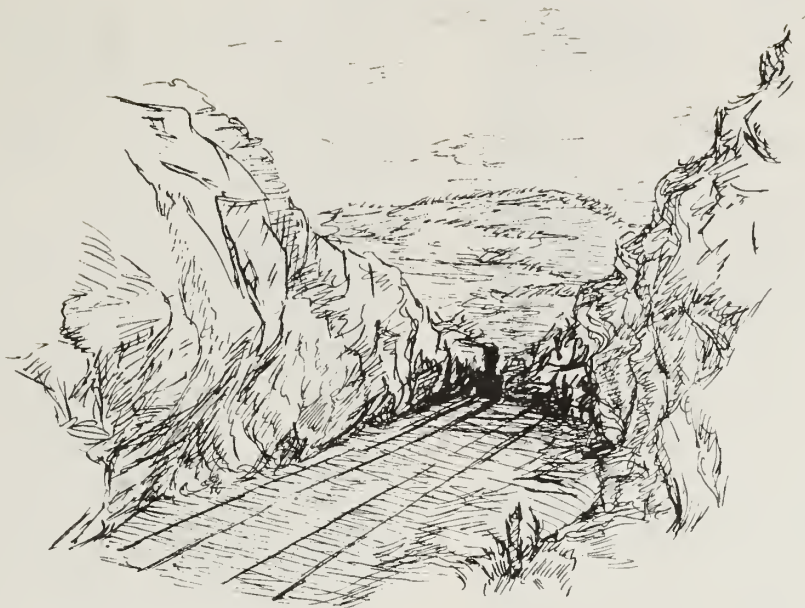
cuttings and bridges follow each other in regular and rapid succession. The grade here is 80 feet per mile, and although the track is sixty feet above the river at the bottom, yet, so rapidly does the water fall, that at Mc'Elwain's Mills, about five miles distant, the grade is but 2½ feet above the mill dam. Nor does the passing traveller, hurling along rapidly as he is, see much of the beauty of this mountain gorge. It is not until he has seen, from the base of these mighty structures of art, the passage of the cars, that their magnificence is really felt. Miss Sedgewick thus happily describes the passage up the valley of this river:

"After leaving the wide meadows of the Connecticut, basking in their rich inheritance of alluvial soil, and unimpeded sunshine, you wind through the narrow valleys of the Westfield River, with masses



*First Stone Bridge -
Entrance to the Mountains*

Drawing by Natalie Birrell



Deep Rock Cutting on Western Railroad

Drawing by Natalie Birrell

of mountains before you, and woodland heights crowding in upon you, so that at every puff of the engine the passage visibly contracts. The Alpine character of the river strikes you. The huge stones in its wide channel, which have been torn up and rolled down by the sweeping torrents of spring and autumn, lie bared and whitening in the summer's sun. You cross and recross it, as in its deviations it leaves space on one side or the other for a practicable road.

"At Chester Factories, you begin your ascent of eighty feet in a mile, for thirteen miles. The stream between you and the precipitous hillside, cramped into its rocky bed, is one of the tributaries of the Westfield River. As you trace this stream to its mountain home, it dashes along beside you with the recklessness of childhood. It leaps down precipices, runs forth laughing in the dimpling sunshine, and then, shy as a mountain nymph, it dodges behind a knotty copse of evergreens. In approaching the summit level,

you traverse bridges built a hundred feet above other mountain streams, tearing along their deep-worn beds; and at the 'deep cut', your passage is hewn through solid rocks, whose mighty walls frown over you.

"Mountain scenery changes with every changing season--we might almost say with every change of atmosphere. In the spring, while the skirts of winter still hang over this high-cold region, and the trees seem afraid to put out their buds, the river breaks forth from its icy bars, and leaps and rushes on as if with conscious joy for its recovered liberty. It is the first sound that breaks upon the wearisome lingering of winter, and its music strikes upon the ear like the sweetest of human sounds, the morning song of a child waking one from a dreary dream.

"In summer, as there is little on these savage hills of what is peculiar to summer, flowers and fruitfulness, it is a happy chance to make this pass when piles of

clouds hide the hot sun, and the rain is puring down in sheets, when every little dropping rill that has dried away in the summer's heat is suddenly swelled into a waterfall, and over the banks and down the cliffs they come purring and leaping along.

"In autumn, the beeches and maples on the hillsides are glowing with a metallic brightness, softened and set off most exquisitely by the everygreen of the towering pines, the massive cones of the Norway firs, and the graceful plummy hemlocks that intersperse them.

"In winter, the art that sends you swiftly and securely through these stern solitudes is most gratefully felt. The trees bend creaking before the howling blast, the snow is driving and drifting--here it is piled on either side in solid walls above you car, and there hideous roots of the upturned stumps are bare. Even the hardy mountain

children have shrunk from the biting blast, and the whimpering dog has begged an inside berth. You see no little tow-head with its curious eyes peering at you through the icy window, you hear not even the salute of a bark. On you glide, by the aid of the most recent discoveries and ingenious contrivances of art, through a country whose face is still marked with the savage grandeur of its primeval condition."

In descending this plane no steam is required, but on the contrary, the "brakes" are put on to prevent too great speed from the force of gravity. We have seen a train of loaded wood cars make the decent at a frightful speed with no engine, the friction upon the brakes throwing out sparks of fire visible in the day-time, and leaving a train of smoke behind, long after the cars were out of sight and hearing.

MAY 8, 1978

by Diane Laude

White painted letters initial Prospect Rock
April's gusty winds blow clouds above
and below
trains whistle
symphonic sound throughout
Huntington Valley
May's first colors appear
Pastel pink landscapes of magnolia and red maples bud
Forsythia and daffodil bloom earthly sunshine
And birches, like white church candles,
lighten the hillsides' watercolor wash
Arbutus trailing beneath mountain laurel
waiting for summers' heat
scent the air
for oak leaf illusions
of soaring hawks
welcoming Spring

How It was Done In "Olden Days"

by Doris H. Hayden

For many years I have delved into records of early Blandford. It may interest the present generation to read how various matters were taken care of in those days. Probably other towns handled them in much the same way.

I was asked by the selectmen to look over the mass of books and papers which remained in the vault of the Deane Building which is to be torn down. It was a fascinating task because I "struck oil" from time to time. All grist for the historian.

TOWN WARRANTS

A young man did not automatically become eligible to register on reaching the age of 21. There were other requirements not now in force. Today's warrants have a set form but these of the early 1800's are interesting.

"Hampshire ss To John Cochran
Constable of the Town of Blandford in
said County

You are hereby required in the Name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to notify and warn the Inhabitants of Said Town duly Quallified to vote for Representatives in the General Court of said Commonwealth (viz) the male Inhabitants of said Town being twenty one years of Age and resident in said Town for the space of one year next preceeding having a freehold Estate within said Town of the Annual Income of three pounds or any estate to the value of Sixty pounds To Assemble at the publick meeting House, etc., etc."

Dec. 1, 1800 (Initial wording the same)

"to Notify and warn the freeholders and other Inhabitants of said Town Quallified by law to vote in Town Meetings - viz - such as pay one single Tax besides the poll or polls, a Sum equal to One Single poll tax, etc., etc."

Sept. 2, 1802

"to warn the freeholders and other Inhabitation Qualified by Law to vote in town meetings (viz) those that pay to one single tax a sum Equal to two thirds of a poll tax, etc., etc."

Oct. 21, 1802

"to notify and warn the inhabitants of said town of Blandford duly quallified to vote (viz the male inhabitants of said town being twenty one years of age and resident in said town for the space of one year next preceeding haveing a freehold estate within said town of the annual income of ten dollars or any estate of the value of two hundred dollars) to assemble, etc. etc."

SCHOOLING

As in most towns round about, there were district schools and Blandford had thirteen beginning in 1802. At the time of the annual election of town officials, one person was chosen from each district to serve on a "prudential committee". In addition a "town committee was named (usually three, but sometimes more) to oversee the whole. This committee often consisted of the minister, a lawyer and perhaps a doctor. These were men with

greater education and one of their duties was to examine would-be teachers.

In the vault I found packets of small pieces of paper on which the certificates to teach were written. The earliest found bore the date 1826.

“Blandford 5th May 1826
This certifies that Miss Caroline E. Hatch has been duly examined and is hereby recommended to instruct the School in the centre of this town.

Dorus Clarke
Orrin Sage
Abner Gibbs Com'ttee"
Rufus Blair

“This certifies that Mr. Joseph M. Ladd has been examin'd and we hereby recommend him as qualified to keep the Grammar School in the Centre District in Blandford. Decem' 11th, 1826

Dorus Clarke
Abner Gibbs
Orrin Sage Comm'ee"
Reuben Boies Jr.
Rufus Blair
Justus Boies

On the reverse is:—

“This may certify that I have been engaged in the Center school in Blandford the term of sixteen weeks at \$15 pr week.
Joseph M. Ladd”

The law directed towns in the Commonwealth containing fifty families, or householders, to provide a school-master or school-masters of good morals, to teach children to read and write and instruct them in the English language, as well as in

arithmetic, orthography and decent behaviour. This was for the “common school”.

The law also directed that “every town or district containing two hundred families, or householders, shall be provided with a grammar school-master of good morals, well instructed in the Latin, Greek and English languages.”

Blandford had neglected to provide for the grammar school and was called on the carpet for so doing. The town records for Nov. 10, 1817 have this:—

“Voted to choose a Committee of three to provide a Grammar School-Master & set up a school as the Law directs, if in their opinion that course shall be necessary & most for the Interest of the Town.”

“Voted to choose an Agent to appear for the Town in the Circuit Court of Common Pleas & plead to an Indictment pending before said Court against the Town of Blandford for not keeping a grammar school as the Law directs and to defend the same.”

At the same meeting the town's representative to the General Court was instructed to “use his best endeavors at the next session of the General Court to procure a Repeal.”

The selectmen's order book, under the date of April 20, 1818, has this entry:—

“Rev. John Keep

To boarding the Rev. Mr. Emerson nine weeks while teaching the grammar School.”

This was no doubt the Rev. Samuel M. Emerson of Chester.

The examining committee was not always fully satisfied with the results of an examination and two teachers just

squeaked by but were given the following certificates:—

“This certifies that we have duly examined Mr. Edward C. Snow & hereby recommend him to teach the School near the Pond (Cochran Pond) but sh’d have been better pleased if he had more acquaintance with English Grammar & Geography.

Blandford

Dec. 15, 1826

D. Clarke
Rufus Blair
Orrin Sage

Com’

“This certifies that we have duly examined Mr. Aaron Clarke & hereby recommend him to teach the School near Mr. Elijah Gibbs (on Gibbs Road) but

should have been better pleased if he had more acquaintance with English Grammar & Geography.

Blandford

Dec. 15, 1816

D. Clarke
Rufus Blair
Orrin Sage

Com’

To receive payment, a teacher presented the certificate, with an order drawn by a member of the district school committee, to the town treasurer.

When it became necessary to replace a school house and erect another in any district, the inhabitants of that area were assessed a separate tax for the purpose. Our present Historical Society building was formerly a schoolhouse and I found a list of those taxed in 1845 to replace an older



Drawing by Natalie Birrell

building which stood in another spot on the common. The total tax came to \$506.69. However, shares in the "upper room" were sold--which money was probably used for the additional story. The use of this room was allowed for many years for other functions than schooling. I have some reason to think some church service were held there. One runs across the word "Lyceum" occasionally, so perhaps debates and lectures took place there. Later, the records of the Ladies Benevolent Society show that they, too, used the room.

ROAD CARE

Another separate tax was that for maintaining highways. The town was divided into highway districts which were very different from the school districts. Each male in the district was assessed according to his property valuation, plus a poll-tax - or only a poll tax if he had no property. The tax could be worked out during the year by actually performing the work. In those days of dirt roads there was often much to be done. Hard rains could wash out whole sections. Also, in winter, oxen and shovels were needed to break out the roads after snowstorms. No high powered machinery -- just muscle and determination.

CARE OF THE ELDERLY AND WELFARE

There was no such thing as Social Security or Medicare then. People were proud and hope to be able to care for themselves. However, when one grew old and feeble some other means became necessary.

When the owner of a farm and his wife approached their later years an indenture was often drawn up whereby title to the property passed to an heir - if the conditions were met. I have two in an old

document box. Charles B. Hayden of Blandford agreed with Ely Brockett to "support and maintain the said Ely in sickness & health & to furnish him with a good & respectable burial after his decease." Ely was grandfather of Charles Brockett Hayden.

Ely, himself, had earlier signed an indenture with his father, John Brockett, whereby he agreed to "pay the Rent of one cent a year at the expiration of each & every year during the term of John's natural life. Also to truly support and maintain the said John & his wife during the natural life of the sd John."

Interesting accounts of the way a husband provided for his widow are found in wills. John Boies' will is an example.

"To wife Ann

12 bushels grain (viz)

4 bushels wheat

4 bushels Ry

4 bushels Indin corn

6 score good pork

5 score good beef

3 barrels of sider

6 bushels Winter aples &

a sufficient quality of Sauce of all sorts

All to be provided and laid in at her Dwelling House anually (Note: "sauce" meant garden produce.)

All the above articales I order my well beloved Son, Samuel Boies, to Provide for my Dearly beloved Wife anually during her Natural Life

And further I give my Dearly beloved Wife, Ann, my mear & two cows

and order that my son, Samuel Boies, shall be at the Cost of keeping Sd mear & Cows sumer & Winter anually

and further I order that my son, Samuel, Shall provide for my Wife Thirty waight of Good flax & Ten Waight of Good Wool anually During her Natural Life

and further I Leve to my Dearly Beloved

Wife the north Rome of my Dwelling House & a priveledge in my siler (cellar) So much as she Shall want During her Natural Life."

Certainly a very explicit bequest, which also gives an idea of the needs of a woman of that day.

A rather unusual deed, whereby Wm P. Lloyd quit-claimed any right to the dower of his mother, Cynthia Lloyd. After setting our 27 acres & 82 Rods of land, he goes on:-

Aug. 28, 1829 "Also the use of the S front room on the lower floor in the house and the N front chamber; and also a privy in common with me, (---- ----) to use space-way and stairs therein and 1/3 part of the cellar under sd house, being so much of sd cellar as is under the kitchen and no more, and also privilege to use sd kitchen for washing, baking & passing into the cellar. Also the use of shelves on N side of W end of buttery and privilege in the sink therein. Also right of passage from kitchen through the space to the wood house and the use of 1/3 part of wagon house & whole of room over sd woodhouse. Also the stable in S E corner of barn, and the scaffold over the same and E scaffold over the barn floor and privy in common with me in barn floor, 1/3 part of barn yard on S side thereof, and privilege of using water at the well in sd barnyard and at well by the house, & the use of 1/3 part of the wood yard south of sd house, and 1/2 of the garden being the E half thereof, & privilege of passing & repassing to & from road to sd house & barn through said wood yard.

To have & to hold for & during the term of her natural life as tenant in Dower & no other.

Wm P. Lloyd''

It seems rather amusing now but there it is in black and white so neither one could mistake the terms.

For some, town assistance was the only

recourse. If a relative was willing to have mother, father, aunt, or uncle in his home but did not feel financially able to support them, the town did pay for that support.

Other paupers were put up for auction and the person whose bid was lowest was the one chosen to care for them for the coming year. One can only wonder if the bid was always adequate. Also these paupers were often moved each year -- perhaps a traumatic experience. See how Widow Black fared.

May 10th 1813 the Wi'd Black sat up to the lowest Bidder pr week to keep one year

Nathan Cannon Bidd \$1.65

Being the lowest Bd and was struck off to him

May 9th 1814 the Wi'd Black sat up to the lowest Bidder pr week to be suporded one year

Cap't Isreal Cannon Bidd \$1.32 and Being the lowest Bid was struck off to him

May 8th 1815 The Wi'd Black sat up By the Over-sears of the Towns Poor to the lowest Bidder pr week

to be supported one year from the 13th of this month

May 6th 1816 The Towns Poor sold to the lowest Bidder pr week to be kept one year

Wi'd Black sat up

Dea Jesse Bishop bid \$1.40 and being the lowest bidder she was struck off to him

May 5th 1817 the Wd Jane Black sat up to the lowest bidder per week to support for one year beginning the 13 of May Inst by the overseers of the poor of sd town

and struck off to Dea Jesse Bishop at \$1.38 per week he being the lowest bidder

May 4, 1818 The support of the Wd Jane Black for one year to commence the 14th of May Inst

and struck off the Nathan Cannon at \$1.24 per week he being the lowest bidder

Poor Widow Black died Dec. 14, 1818 - aged 102 years!

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

The church was very strict and more than once members were called before the church to publicly confess their sins and ask forgiveness and prayers.

Several were suspended from the communion and privileges of the church for reasons such as:-

- \$. The use of ardent spirits
2. Embracing the "erroneous sentiments of Millerism"
3. Embracing "the principle of Unitarianism, which we deem to be utterly opposed to the Gospel."

However, two cases are noted which dragged on from at least July 1788 to the end of 1789. Without giving the full names, lest some descendant be embarrassed, here are the records.

"July 1788 The Session (the church elders) meet at the meeting house & having deliberated on the heinous sin of card playing, gave it as our judgement that Isaac----, Brother in this Church, who has been found guilty of this sin, should publicly acknowledge his fault in so doing."

"Sept. 18, 1788 Session meet according to adjournment, Elders present Wi'l Boies John Knox Sam'l Boies Robert Lloyd. Isaac----- & James-----were present according to request. James ----- was found guilty of unnecessarily performing his own business on the Lords day, for which we deemed it expedient that he should publicly acknowledge his fault in the house of God. These two Brethren continuing obstinate, they were suspended from church privilege till further attention can be given to the matter."

"August 11, 1789 Session meet according to appointment at the house of their Pastor. Voted that Isaac----for playing of cairds & for his contumaciousness & insulting talk to the session be admonished in publick before all as the gospel directs."

"August 16, 1789 Agreeable to the vote of the session Isaac ---- was admonished after having a copy of the admonition, both for the sin of card playing & contumaciousness."

"Sept. 25, 1789 Voted that Isaac ----- be excommunicated from this church on the fourth Sabbath from this date publicly & that a copy of the excommunication be sent him previous to its being publicly read.

Voted that James ----- be publicly admonished the sabbath after next."

"December 8, 1789 The church Session being legally warned met according to appointment.

Voted it expedient, for the honour of religion in this church that Isaac ---- should be excommunicated the last sabbath in this month, & a copy of the excommunication be sent him previously, in which the things for which he is deemed sensorable shall be mentioned.

Voted also that James ----- should be again admonished, & then if there be not manifest repentance of those things for which he isensored, he shall be excommunicated on the first sabbath in January seventeen hundred ninety."

"Decemb'r 16, 1789 Session meet according to appointment. James ----- appeared & offered to make his acknowledgement the second time for breach of sabbath & ill treatment of the session. Was accepted by Session.

"I, James -----, under a sense of the sinfullness of violating the commands of God, & of my own conduct in that particu-

lar. do now humbly acknowledge that a year ago some time last spring, I did exceeding sinfull in performing my own business on the Lords day in bringing a load of shad fish from connecticut river to Sackets at the foot of the mountain, as it was a breach both of divine & human laws, which was sufficient occasion of offense to my christian brethren and a reproach to the christian name. I do now acknowledge I have done exceeding wickedly in that I have not willingly before this time, manifested and abhorance of my conduct, in violating Gods holy sabbath for by thus doing, I have sined against God, offended my christian brethren & done that, by which others may stumble & fall. I have wounded the cause of Ch. in giving unchristian treatment to the Pastor & Elders, whose duty it is to deal with those who walk disorderly. And do now humbly ask the forgiveness of all whom I have offended & that they would unite with me in praying our *heavenly father* that he would forgive me thro' the riches of his grace in Jesus Christ, & that I may be kept from wandering out of the path of my duty, & be more faithful in my christian walk.

Read in publick before the Church & congregation on the 20 of December 1789.
Joseph Badger Pastor''

Excommunication of Isaac -----

Dec. 27, 1789

“The Session having been regularly warned & convened at the house of Elder Samuel Boies on the eighth of December 1789. Then took into consideration the conduct of Isacc ----- which he has manifested.

1. In card playing
2. In his treatment of the session & church authority thro the whole course of their dealing with him, and having found nothing in the whole of his conduct, that

appears to manifest the least degree even of visible repentance, but on the other hand a contumacious spirit, & actual contempt of the authority of the Church, altho' he pretended to confess, his conduct was such as manifested a wrathfull spirit, & contempt of the laws of Christ.

We do therefore view it expedient for the honour of religion in this Church to cast him out of our communion & fellowship.

And now therefore agreeable to the authority derived from Gods word & given by Jesus Christ, the great head of the church, we are constrained to proceed in giving the painful sentence against you, by which we do now *reject you, & cut you off & cast you out of our fellowship & communion, & withdraw our watch and cair over you, no more to treat you as a brother, but to consider you as an heathen man & a publican.*

By order of the Session.

Joseph Badger Pastor''

One capitulated and one *would* not!!

SOCIAL LIBRARY

Free public libraries were unheard of in the 1800's. However, books were available in social libraries. The remnant of the Blandford Social Library is in the Porter Memorial Library.

These by-laws give an idea of how the libraries operated:

“Your Committee appointed to form by-laws for Blandford Library would report as follows:

1. That the shares in s'd Library to be of the value of one dollar and fifty cents each, and person may hold as many as he pleases.
2. There shall be chosen anually a Clerk, Librarian, Treasurer and a

Committee to take care of said Library, assess fines for damages done to the books, or breaches of the bye laws, and to purchase books, or any other necessarys for use of said library. Also render an account of the state of the Library and how the moneys have been expended at every annual meeting---also note all injurys done the books in blank page of the books so injured.

3. The annual meeting for the election of Officers & granting of money for use of Library shall be on the second tuesday of February at one O Clock in the afternoon at the place where the library (torn) kept, and there shall be five meetings (torn) year for the purpose of returning the books, drawing out books, which shall be on the first tuesdays of February, April, July, October and Dec'r at three O Clock P.M. - and any proprietor neglecting to return his book or books for one hour after said time shall pay to use of s'd Library six cents for each Volume so detain'd and one cent for each day he shall keep said Volume from said Library and the priviledge of the library suspended till the money is paid.

4. For the purpose of drawing books equally the proprietors shall be classed into four classes and draw the books in the following manner Viz: at the first drawing the first Class first, the second next, then the third, & then the fourth; at the next drawing the second Class first, the third second, the fourth third & the first third, the second fourth; the fourth drawing the fourth Class first, the first second, the second third & the third fourth and at the fifth drawing the first Class first again and so on in the same rotation as before and if more than one proprietor of the same class shall want the same Volume the one willing to Give the most for it shall have it. Each proprietor shall be allow'd to

exchange his books between the meetings and after the proprietors present shall all have drawn there books as above. Those proprietors living more than three miles from the place where the library is kept shall have a right to draw a second Volume on each share he holds in the Library but no proprietor shall be allowed to draw a Volume while there is any tax or fine on his share unpaid.

Blandford April 9th 1802
Russell Attwater
Samuel Knox
Reuben Boies''

There were no "who-dun-its" listed in a partial catalog found in the Porter Memorial Library. The books were all non-fiction such as:

Embassy to China
Fable of the Bees
French Revolution
Gibbon's Downfall of the Roman Empire
Goldsmith's Essays - 3 vols.
History of England
History of New England
History of the United States
Life of Luther
Life of Christ
Life of Franklin
Life of Whitfield
Seige of Gibraltar
Voltaire's History of Charles 12th
Wilberforce on Religion
Washington's Letters - 2 vols.
Weims' Life of Washington
Wonders of Creation

These are but a few of the titles. The center school of that time *may* have housed the library but I do not know this.

No records are found to show just how long the library existed but the latest date known is 1844.

"Blandford Feb. 12, 1844

We hereby authorize Lafayette Gibbs

to vote himself on our shares in the Blandford Social Library for the present year.

Edward Knox
Justin Wilson

Eli Pease
Abijah B. Knox

Abel Weaver
John Gibbs
Samuel Hamilton
Justus Knox
Orrin Sage

Widow Maria Knox
A (shbel) Mitchell
Abner Gibbs



Drawing by Natalie Birrell

HOW BEAUTY TOLD ME

by Helen Scott

"Beauty" was our first family cow, very much loved and appreciated. Being a Guernsey, she was more gentle than certain high-strung breeds, and gave us plenty of rich milk for the eight of us living in our home at that time.

We had her in the barn maternity pen where she would be free to tend to her little one when it came. I'd been gone all day, and upon arriving home, went immediately to the barn to see how she fared.

No calf as yet, however when I petted her she pulled away so she could run her rough tongue over my hand, then she walked over to the frosted window and licked the pane. Back she came to me and repeated her licking my hand, after which she again headed for the window.

"Beauty", I exclaimed, "you're thirsty!", and ran to the house for a bucket of water which she eagerly drank.

The History of Early Russell

*by Jim Meissner, Diana Fuller,
Luann Thayer, and Doris Dumais*

The original settlement of Russell was in the Woronoco Lake area. It was called "Westfield's New Addition". Russell got its name from a man from Boston who promised a bell if the settlers built a church. Before the bell could arrive the church burned down. The church stood at the edge of the lake where the cemetery is now.

Russell was settled mostly by people from Westfield, who, in turn, had come from the eastern part of the state and Connecticut colonies. Some of the early settlers could be traced to Puritan ancestry, but they were mostly New Englanders who had found prices too high in settled sections and came west. As these people moved into the upper Westfield River Valley, this section became known as the New Addition.

On February 25, 1792, the Legislative Act proclaimed that Russell was a town of its own. On February 22, 1809 the boundaries between Russell and Blandford were established. On June 3, 1914 the bounds between Russell and Montgomery were established.

In 1800 the population of Russell was 431 people. In 1860 there were 605 people. In 1900 there were 793 people. This shows that the town grew very slowly.

Back in the early days, settlers used the wood on Russell Mountain for building operations in fast growing towns. This section was called "log land".

In 1838, when the railroad was built in the valley, wood was used for ties and for wood-burning engines. Water power was the sawmill's energy. Some of the bark as waste product went to Russell's tannery.

Hay, grain, and sheep were raised. The grain was ground in water-powered grist mills throughout the town.

An early business in the town was a glove factory furnished with leather from a local tannery. There was a grain store and two General stores. There was a bobbin factory, a blacksmith shop, some taverns, a charcoal kiln, and some people cut wood for a living. There was a brick yard where Westfield River Paper Company now stands. The Norcross Brothers of Worcester built it to produce high class building brick. Brick for the "new" addition to the State House in Boston and the Springfield theatre building were purchased here. Unable finally to get enough clay, Norcross Brothers sold out to Samuel G. Otis who built the dam on its present site.

One of the early schools was at Britton's house on lower Blandford Road. Eight

grades were housed in three rooms. Spanking and whipping were some of the early punishment methods. The school day ran from nine o'clock to three-fifteen. It still is so today at the grammar school.

In 1838 the Western Railroad Corporation came up through. It crossed where the dam is now in Russell's center. It was on the *west* side of the river at first.

Around 1868 the first bridge across the river was built, but the flood of 1908 washed it away. The second bridge was built in 1909. It cost \$12,000 to build. It was higher off the water than the first one. It was built mostly by local help. It was in existence until it was torn down in 1973, when a third one was put up.

(This article was written when the four authors were students at Gateway High School)



Drawing by Mary Rapisarda

Letters

131 Riverview Drive
Chatham, Mass. 02633

Stone Walls
Huntington, Mass.,

Dear Editor,

I have had the opportunity recently, to read the Summer Issue of Stone Walls.

I found your magazine extremely interesting for several reasons. As a member of the Williams family, I have known and visited Montgomery for the past 70 years. My grandfather Gus Williams, and my Aunt and Uncle, Gussie and Fred Williams gave me the opportunity of visiting and knowing your town, its people and some of its history.

The accounts of the 2nd and 4th annual Old Home Days as related in your magazine recalled vivid memories, having attended them with my parents Charles and Alma Williams and my brothers. The dances in the evening made a fitting climax to the celebration.

I noted the reference to my grandfather giving readings and selections at the 1923 celebration. I have many of the old "Readers" that he used.

I was real interested in the article on page 24, which concerned the dismantling and shipment of the Tavern Store to Long Island. My Uncle Fred and I dismantled and matched marked this building for relocation on Long Island. The building was transported in two large truck loads. I went over and spent 2 to 3 weeks re-assembling this building on a waterfront lot as a beach house in the town of Setauxet, L.I. This building was purchased by a Mrs. Post of New York City. (I believe her to be Marjorie Merriweather Post.) She acquired the Tavern Store about 1932 or 1933.

Perhaps you were aware of an article in the Boston Globe recently, regarding your town of Montgomery and some of its history.

Say "Hello" to Wesley Monet and Kenneth Allen and their families.

Thanks for my memories,

Milton A. Williams

Retrospection is a quite usual and likely mental activity of those of us who are experiencing the debatable pleasure of "serving time" in recuperation from an ailment.

Sitting here, not idly really, but physically inactive, gaze fell on a faded, braided rag rug which reacted thoughts of a poem written by my sister - I suppose under quite similar circumstances.

The thought that perhaps it would be appreciated by some of your readers prompts me to submit it to your staff for your publication, at your pleasure and judgment.

Yours truly,

Herbert F. Howe
Box 103
Worthington, Mass.

"HER KEEPSAKE"

by Mildred Howe Eldredge

"It could claim no special beauty-
Antique value would not rate.
Just a rug to do its duty-
Chosen for a humble fate.
Lying there its brightness faded,
Mid new rugs of gayer hue
Rounded rows all neatly braided
Of odd bits: some red, some blue
A touch of burgundy and yellow;
A sprinkling here and there of jade,
Blended a mosaic mellow,
Faithful laboring had made.
Not worth keeping to another
Yet she saw in every trace
Patient willing hands of mother,
Setting strand on strand in place.
Hands long called to final resting
Left a benediction there;
Hidden heartbeats therein nesting
Memories of a mother's care.
Days recounted of her presence
Breathe her love and sacrifice
Gave the rug an iridescence
And a value beyond price."

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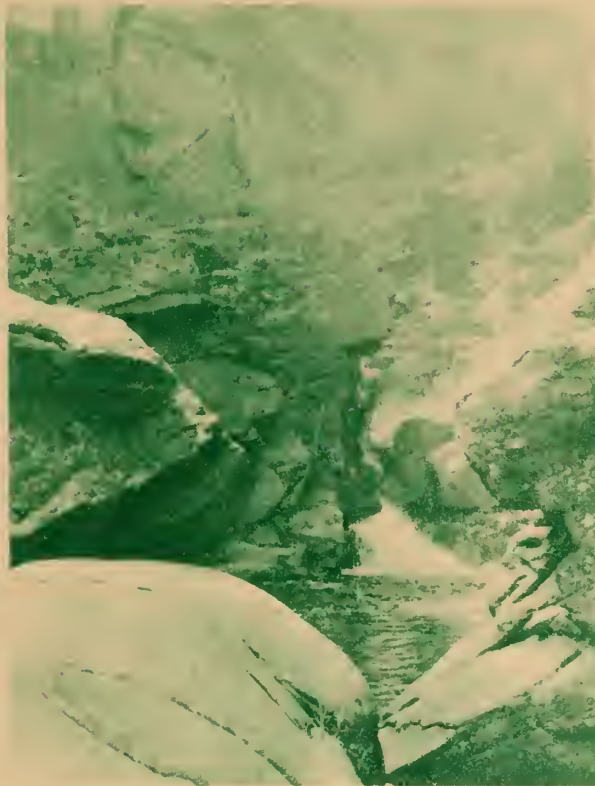
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*“I like stonewalls, the years that they embrace,
Their rugged, homespun love for commonplace...”*

STONEWALLS

by Loton Rogers Pitts
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